Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Message Text

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PAGE 01 JAKART 08754 010159Z
ACTION HA-05

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 EA-10 IO-13 ISO-00 INSE-00 /041 W
---------- 120911 010204Z /14/17
P R 300537Z JUN 78
FM AMEMBASSY JAKARTA
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 9857
INFO AMCONSUL HONG KONG
AMEMBASSY KUALA LUMPUR PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY BANGKOK PRIORITY
AMEMBASSY MANILA
AMEMBASSY SINGAPORE
AMEMBASSY PARIS
AUSMISSION GENEVA 593

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FOR HA FROM LOWMAN

C O R R E C T E D C O P Y FOR EO TAGS AND SUBJECT

E.O. 11652: NA
TAGS: SREF
SUBJECT: INDONCHINESE REFUGEES-INDONESIAN POLICY

1. LOWMAN, FRIEDMAN AND EMBOFF CALLED ON A.B. ASPOOR, CHIEF OF CONSULAR AFFAIRS AND MFA REPRESENTATIVE ON INTERAGENCY COORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR INDOCHINESE REFUGEE MATTERS. ASPOOR STATED THAT GOI POLICY, FORMULATED AT CABINET LEVEL, WAS NO INDOCHINESE REFUGEES FOR RESETTLEMENT, BUT THAT THEY WOULD BE ACCEPTED FOR ASSISTANCE WHILE IN TRANSIT.

2. ASPOOR SAID THAT HE INTERPRETED "ASSISTANCE IN TRANSIT" AS INCLUDING THE PROVISION OF A FIRST ASYLUM
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PAGE 02 JAKART 08754 010159Z

WHILE RESETTLEMENT WAS SOUGHT FOR THE REFUGEES BY THE UNHCR. IN ANSWER TO A DIRECT QUESTION ASPOOR CONFIRMED THAT IF ANY REFUGEE REQUESTED TEMPORARY ASYLUM IN INDONESIA, IT WOULD BE GRANTED.

3. IF THE REFUGEE WISHED TO PROCEED TO AUSTRALIA AND THE CONDITION OF THE REFUGEE BOAT AND THE WEATHER DID NOT

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

MILITATE AGAINST THIS, THE GOI WOULD ASSIST IN SUCH A
VOYAGE WITH BOAR REPAIR AND PROVISIONS. ASPOOR SAID
THE GOI COULD NOT HOLD REFUGEES IN INDONESIA AGAINST
THEIR WILL: AT WHICH POINT LOWMAN VOTED IT IS
THEORETICALLY POSSIBLE TO EMPOUND THE BOATS. ASPOOR
CLAIMED THAT MOST REFUGEES WHO MAKE IT AS FAR AS INDONESIA
ARE IN FACT ON THE WAY TO AUSTRALIA.

4. LOWMAN DESCRIBED THE NEW 25,000 PAROLE PROGRAM TO
ASPOOR WHO ASKED WHAT USG POLICY WOULD BE AT THE END OF
THE TWELVE MONTH PAROLE PROGRAM. LOWMAN NOTED THAT
USG POLICY WAS TO ATTEMPT TO ASSIST, ON A CONTINUING
BASIS, REFUGEES ESCAPING BY BOAT AND WITHOUT A RESETTLEMENT
OPPORTUNITY ELSEWHERE. THE ADMINISTRATION
WAS COMMITTED TO SEEK NEW REFUGEE LEGISLATION TO
REPLACE THE USE OF THE PAROLE POWER FOR THIS PURPOSE.
IF SUCH NEW LEGISLATION WAS NOT IN PLACE AT THE END OF
THE PRESENT PAROLE PERIOD AND THE FACTS JUSTIFIED SUCH
AN ACTION, A FURTHER PAROLE WOULD HAVE TO CONSIDERED.

5. LOWMAN SAID HE UNDERSTOOD GOI POLICY WAS TO INSIST
THAT ALL MEMBERS OF A BOAT PROCEED TO AUSTRALIA EVEN IF
SOME WERE SEEKING RESETTLEMENT ELSEWHERE. HE NOTED
THAT REFUGEE-RECEIVING NATIONS WOULD MUCH PREFER TO
BE ABLE TO DEAL WITH REFUGEES ON AN INDIVIDUAL, RATHER
THAN BOAT BASIS. ASPOOR SAID RECENT DECISION OF THE
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PAGE 03 JAKART 08754 010159Z

REFUGEE COMMITTEE WOULD MAKE THIS POSSIBLE.

6. COMMENT: DESPITE ASPOOR'S ASSURANCES, THE AUSTRALIAN
EMBASSY IN JAKARTA BELIEVES THE GOI IS SENDING BOATS ON
TO AUSTRALIA WHENEVER POSSIBLE WITHOUT REGARD TO THEIR
WISHES. WHILE THIS MAY BE THE CASE IT IS ALSO PROBABLY
TRUE THAT MOST BOATS ARRIVING HERE ARE ON THE WAY TO
AUSTRALIA. IF INCREASING CASELOADS CREATE STIFFER
ATTITUDES IN THAILAND AND MALAYSIA, THERE ARE LIKELY TO
BE INCREASING INSTANCES OF UNSEAWORTHY BOATS ARRIVING IN
INDONESIA, AND OF BOATS ARRIVING WITH REFUGEES WHO DO
NOT WISH TO PROCEED TO PROCEED TO AUSTRALIA. MEASURES BEING TAKEN
BY AUSTRALIANS (SUCH AS REFUSING FAMILY MEMBERS OF
REFUGEES WHO HAD ARRIVED DIRECT IN AUSTRALIA) ARE ALSO
LIKELY TO REDUCE THE NUMBER WHO DECIDE TO GO ON FROM
INDONESIA. IN SUCH A CASE, THE GOI'S ASSURANCES MAY BE
PUT TO RATHER STIFFER TEST.

7. FOR CANBERRA: AS PERSONNEL ARE AVAILABLE, IT WOULD
BE USEFUL TO RECEIVE THE RESULTS OF INTERVIES OF BOATS
ARRIVING DIRECT IN AUSTRALIA TO DETERMINE THE EXTENT TO
WHICH REFUGEES ARE BEING ACCEPTED OR TURNED AWAY AT THE

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014

VARIOUS POINTS ALONG THEIR ROUTE. SUCH INTERVIEWS,
HOWEVER, WOULD HAVE TO BE CONDUCTED IN LOW KEY AND BEFORE
REFUGEES BECOME AWARE OF ADVANTAGES WHICH MIGHT ACCRUE
TO THEM FROM THE AUSTRALIAN BELIEF THAT THEIR DIRECT
ARRIVAL WAS INVOLUNTARY.
MASTERS

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20 Mar 2014
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